

## **2009 TIP Report Suriname (TIER 2)**

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Suriname is a destination and transit country for men, women, and children from the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Guyana, Colombia, Haiti, Indonesia, Vietnam, and China trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. Suriname is also a source country for women and children trafficked within the country for sexual exploitation and forced labor, as well as women trafficked transnationally for forced labor. Foreign trafficking victims are exploited in illegal urban brothels and the western district of Nickerie. Guyanese women and girls are forced into street prostitution and are trafficked into the sex trade near both legal and illegal gold mining camps in the Amazon jungle. At least one criminal network traffics Brazilian women among gold mining sites in both Suriname and French Guiana. Women from urban areas are recruited for domestic work at these mining camps and subsequently coerced into sexual servitude. Some Chinese men are subjected to forced labor in the construction industry, while some Chinese women are forced into prostitution in massage parlors and brothels. Chinese men and women are forced to labor in grocery stores. Some Haitian migrants transiting Suriname are forced to work in agriculture. Traffickers fraudulently promised at least 23 Surinamese women that they would be given well-paying jobs in Europe after finishing cooking school in Trinidad and Tobago. The women were intercepted in Curacao and returned to Suriname. Although Chinese organized crime units traffic some people to and through Suriname, most traffickers in Suriname operate through smaller, local networks.

The Government of Suriname does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Despite significant resource constraints, the government increased anti-trafficking law enforcement actions, and modestly improved victim assistance and prevention efforts. Reports of officials, complicity in trafficking, however, continue and the government has made no efforts to reduce demand for commercial sex acts.

### Recommendations for Suriname

Continue investigating, prosecuting, and adequately punishing trafficking offenders; investigate and prosecute corrupt public officials who allegedly facilitate trafficking; investigate reports of forced labor; consider measures to better protect both foreign and Surinamese trafficking victims; and sponsor public campaigns to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts.

### Prosecution

The Surinamese government strongly increased its anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts over the last year. Suriname prohibits all forms of human trafficking through a 2006 amendment to its Criminal Code, which prescribes sufficiently stringent penalties of five to 20 years, imprisonment ) penalties that are commensurate with those prescribed for other

grave crimes. An interagency, public-private working group (IWG) coordinates government efforts to investigate and prosecute traffickers. The public prosecutor reported nine trafficking arrests between March 2008 and February 2009. Three offenders were convicted: A Korean boat captain was sentenced to six years, imprisonment for the forced labor of four Vietnamese, and two nightclub owners, a Chinese and Brazilian couple, were convicted of trafficking nine Brazilian women into prostitution. The husband was sentenced to 12 months' and the wife to four months' imprisonment. A case with three defendants accused of trafficking a 16-year old Guyanese girl for sexual exploitation at a nightclub was before the courts in March 2009. Two additional cases are pending. The TIP Police Unit regularly inspected places where trafficking victims might be found, and conducted random brothel checks to ensure the women were not mistreated, no minors were present, and that owners did not keep the women's airline tickets and passports. The government requested the extradition of four Surinamers from Curacao, in connection with the probable trafficking of 21 Surinamese men and two women en route to Europe through Trinidad and Tobago; three more Surinamers were arrested in Suriname in connection with the case, and are in jail pending trial. Investigations continue in the case of 11 Indonesians rescued from forced labor at a motorbike assembly plant. The government initiated investigations of some Surinamese officials who reportedly facilitated trafficking into the country by accepting money and favors from suspected traffickers, though no prosecutions were begun.

### Protection

The government continued to provide moderate protection for victims of trafficking during the year. The government provided free legal services to trafficking victims, and instituted a formal mechanism for referring victims to a local foundation which, in collaboration with the TIP Police Unit and the Ministry of Justice and Police, coordinates the provision of shelter, medical care, and psychological services to identified foreign and Surinamese victims. Surinamese law does not grant foreign victims temporary or permanent residency status or legal alternatives to removal to countries where they may face hardship or retribution, though victims who participated in law enforcement investigations and prosecutions were allowed to stay during these proceedings. There were reports that some foreign victims were incarcerated and deported for immigration violations, though identified foreign victims are generally not penalized for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked. The same local foundation is charged with arranging shelter and services for as long as victims are needed for the investigation and court case, then works with embassy or consulate officials to arrange victims, repatriation. Foreign victims were required to remain in the country until they could issue a sworn statement and a judge determined that they could leave Suriname. Victims who had been found working illegally in Suriname could not seek temporary employment while awaiting trial proceedings. The Ministry of Justice and Police is reviewing draft legislation that would grant foreign victims legal resident status. The government encourages victims to assist in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking offenders. During the year, at least 28 victims cooperated with police. None chose to file a civil suit for restitution against their traffickers, although that option is available.

## Prevention

The government continued its solid prevention efforts during the year. Senior officials continued to condemn and draw public attention to the problem of human trafficking in Suriname. The government ran an education campaign for journalists, religious groups, youth organizations, officials, labor unions, brothel owners, and NGOs, and conducted a specialized campaign in the Marowijne District. The IWG systematically monitored government anti-trafficking efforts. Immigration police monitored visa applications and ports of entry for patterns that might indicate trafficking. Police closed a brothel in Nickerie district for exploiting a minor in prostitution. The Ministry of Labor along with the Youth Affairs section of the Police Force and the Commission for Child Rights educated and informed the public on the worst forms of child labor and child exploitation. The government made no discernable efforts to reduce demand for commercial sex acts.